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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001066

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: TRANSITION ASSESSMENT COMPLETE -- NOW WHAT?

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Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) Summary: The government officially ended its assessment of the transition's accomplishments and failings June 28. The assessment, heralded in President Kabila's May 16 public remarks, has been officially billed as designed to provide a blueprint for improvement in the last year of the transition. The process -- which took much longer than originally foreseen -- has been excruciating for those involved and its actual usefulness, vice potentially politically advantageous PPRD tool, remains to be seen. End Summary.

A Valid Concept

2. (C) As described by both the Ministers of Interior and Defense, the transitional assessment was actually a surprisingly useful process, at least internally. All Ministers were required to provide a summary of the transition goals which fell within their area of responsibility; identify resources they had been given with which to accomplish those goals (whether domestic or international funds, international training and equipment, etc); account for how they had used those resources; delineate areas undone or needing further effort, with associated resource demands; provide recommendations on how they intend to address the outstanding tasks; and respond to questions following their presentations. For instance, both the above-mentioned Ministers are part of the Security Commission chaired by Vice President Ruberwa. Therefore, both had to prepare and present their reports to the assembled membership of that commission. The ministers of Economy and Finance, for instance, went through a similar process for Vice President Bemba's Finance Commission. The unexpectedly complex but apparently well-conceived definition of the individual reports seems largely to explain why the entire process took as long as it did, particularly given the number of questions posed following the reports (38 in the case of the Minister of Interior, 32 in the case of the Minister of Defense). In most cases, lack of appropriate resources seems to have been identified as among major obstacles to fully meeting the original transition goals, although the Defense Minister also highlighted political roadblocks to military integration.

What Now?

3. (C) If the process itself was potentially useful, the big question remains what the government -- and particularly President Kabila, whose initiative this was -- intends to do with the results. Before the assessment actually began, senior presidential advisor Augustin Katumba described it to PolCouns as a political win-win for Kabila. The results will give the President the opportunity to replace some PPRD cabinet ministers should he decide to do so (a useful gesture to appease public sentiment that no one in the government does anything), while also putting other components of the government such as the RCD and MLC under pressure to do likewise or risk appearing indifferent to apparent public desire for change. National Security Advisor Samba Kaputo echoed this sentiment June 27, hinting that Kabila might include some sort of announcement about a PPRD cabinet shuffle in his anticipated June 30 remarks. VP Ruberwa told Ambassador during a June 11 meeting that it would be difficult for him to replace RCD cabinet ministers at this time, given that he has only recently survived, with difficulty, his internal party political evaluation. The same essentially holds true for VP Bemba, who is increasingly alienated from his MLC party base and is unlikely to want to provoke an internal confrontation.

Comment

4. (C) While some presidential advisors may be taking the view that this is a no-lose proposition for Kabila, that is not necessarily the case. Changing key ministers (such as interior or defense) at this point could actually slow progress on major elections-related issues while new appointees try to learn the ropes, and also risks playing into UDPS leader Tshishekedi's hands by "acknowledging" that some ministers should go. A better strategy could be to keep

most of the incumbents and instead actually demand that they address the shortcomings they themselves have identified. Judging from the official remarks June 28 at the closing of the assessment process, however, little real change may result from the evaluation, since the message at yesterday's meeting was mainly that more resources (mostly from the international community) are what is needed to address most issues. While true that obviously more resources could, in an ideal world, mean more progress, much could be done, especially in the crucial social arena, with what already is available.

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